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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE

RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 4602

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 STATE 129940

SIPDIS

FROM A/S DANIEL SULLIVAN TO AMBASSADORS, DCM'S,  
ECON COUNSELORS, PAOS, AND AG COUNSELORS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [KPAO](#)

SUBJECT: FY 2009 BIOTECHNOLOGY OUTREACH STRATEGY AND  
DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

**¶1.** (U) Summary. Agricultural biotechnology has great potential to help address the challenges of food insecurity and rural economic development. To realize this potential, and to protect the interests of U.S. farmers and exporters, we seek to promote understanding of the technology and encourage the adoption of fair, transparent, and science-based policies and practices in other countries. This cable outlines key elements of our current biotech strategy as well as some of the tools and resources (including EEB's biotech outreach funds) available to help posts pursue an active biotech agenda in supporting this strategy.

**¶2.** (U) I urge you to encourage the various sections and agencies in your missions to work together as they pursue our shared goals on this issue. I encourage missions, particularly those in "high priority" biotech countries (paragraph 4), to prepare thoughtful, interagency coordinated proposals for use of this year's EEB biotech outreach funds (see paragraphs 11-17 for instructions on submitting proposals). The deadline for these proposals is January 20, 2009; however we may begin allocating EEB biotech outreach funds before the deadline, as necessary. End Summary.

#### Biotech Outreach objectives for 2009

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**¶3.** (U) Our biotech outreach objectives for 2009 are to increase access to, and markets for, biotech as a means to help address the underlying causes of the food crisis, and to promote agricultural technology's role in biofuel production. We will pursue these objectives by:

-- Encouraging science and technology to play a crucial role in unleashing additional agricultural productivity, particularly in the developing world. Many international organizations have called for a second Green Revolution in Africa, and biotechnology will be a central part of that effort. Biotechnology is being used to increase crop yields and enhance the ability of food crops to sustain climate shocks. Advances are being made to protect the environment through reduced use of chemicals and as a result of low tillage farming techniques.

-- Publicizing that agricultural biotechnology can help address the food crisis and serve as a development tool by increasing food productivity and food security, reducing crop input costs, and helping to alleviate poverty.

-- Reinforcing the environmental gains from decreased insecticide use, reduced soil erosion, and increased plant efficiency, stressing the potential for improved nutrition and disease prevention, and encouraging the development and commercialization of ag-biotech products that meet the unique needs of developing nations.

-- Encouraging countries to abide by global trading rules and accept science-based evaluation of food production methods. The U.S. will continue its effort to open markets and advocate responsible regulation. We will continue to seek full EU compliance with the 2006 WTO ruling against the EU de facto moratorium on approving agricultural biotechnology.

-- Taking full advantage of the WTO biotech ruling by explaining the significance of the case, particularly to developing countries, and by stressing the global scientific consensus on the safety of ag-biotech products noted by the final WTO panel decision. Some countries, especially in the developing world, lack the opportunity to utilize advanced crop technology due to concerns that the EU will not accept their agricultural exports if produced with the aid of biotechnology. The U.S. should support developing countries that seek access to biotechnology, and reaffirm the WTO's 2006 panel ruling on this issue.

-- Ensuring that activities taken pursuant to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Codex Alimentarius are in line with those countries' obligations under international trade agreements.

-- Promoting the understanding that ag-biotech

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contributes to production of biofuels through increased yields and improved feedstocks, and helps ensure food security.

#### Strategy and Resources

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**¶4. (U)** Although our biotech strategy is global, we plan to pay particular attention to advancing this strategy through active engagement with key countries, with the medium-term goal of establishing models of ag-biotech trade and development success that can be a powerful demonstration to others. These key countries in FY 2009 include:

---Brazil  
---Burkina Faso  
---China  
---Colombia  
---Czech Republic  
---Egypt  
---Germany  
---Ghana  
---India  
---Indonesia  
---Kenya  
---Nicaragua  
---Nigeria  
---Peru  
---Philippines  
---Romania  
---Russia  
---South Africa  
---Thailand  
---Ukraine  
---Vatican  
---Vietnam

**¶5. (U)** The Department works with a host of other USG agencies, international organizations, NGOs and industry

to promote understanding and acceptance of biotechnology as well as new initiatives related to this technology. Within the State Department, the Agricultural and Biotech Trade Affairs Division (EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT) takes primary responsibility for ag-biotech issues. EEB has available biotech outreach funds that can be allocated to posts to further ag-biotech policy and promote acceptance of the technology. These funds are administered by EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT with the assistance of EEB/EX.

**¶6.** (U) Other USG agencies, such as USDA and USAID, have resources to help posts support USG biotech policy. Close collaboration among all relevant embassy sections and agencies is key to ensuring that posts fully exploit the range of available USG biotech resources. Many posts establish ag-biotech working groups to put together successful ag-biotech advocacy programs. In order to facilitate effective coordination between EEB and the field on ag-biotech issues, posts should forward points of contact for ag-biotech issues to EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT, Marcella Szymanski and Jack Bobo.

**¶7.** (U) Posts are encouraged to utilize the services of the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP). Funds are available through EEB's Biotech Outreach Program to fund IIP Speaker Programs for Biotechnology. (Note: Posts wishing to work with IIP in the recruitment of speakers and the administration of speaker programs must conform with the policies and guidelines of IIP. If IIP is to be involved, then speakers must be U.S. citizens, they must be offered an honorarium of \$200 per day (excepting USG employees) for each day of the program, and must be offered business class seating if the travel itinerary exceeds 14 hours. It is suggested that posts work closely with Public Affairs Sections during the development and implementation of such programs, as the PA sections are familiar with IIP program requirements, procedures and request submission formats. All IIP program requests MUST/MUST go through PA.)

**¶8.** (U) Posts are encouraged to use ECA's International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) by including ag-biotech participants---under their regular allotments---for the program. For example, visits to U.S. farms where biotech crops are being cultivated, as well as discussions with U.S. farmers, have proven to be effective ways of dispelling concerns about biotech on the part of foreign visitors. Posts should consider adding a biotech component to International Visitor

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programs for a wide range of opinion leaders, not just biotech specialists.

**¶9.** (U) Specially designed biotech Voluntary Visitors projects involving host government officials, industry leaders, and academics might also be considered. The Foreign Press Center could arrange biotech reporting tours for U.S.- based foreign media and/or arrange visits by foreign media to the U.S. PAO's should coordinate these efforts directly with the relevant PA and ECA offices, although EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT would appreciate receiving info copies of proposals and nominations, and stands ready to assist ECA and posts with programming efforts.

**¶10.** (U) EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT staff are available as appropriate to advocate in host capitals, troubleshoot problematic legislation, and participate as public speakers on ag-biotech. In particular, this is the key role of the State Department's Senior Advisor for Biotechnology, Jack Bobo.

**¶11. (U)** The Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs (EEB) has received funding in each of the last six fiscal years for ag-biotech outreach projects. Although the full level of funding for fiscal year 2009 is not yet certain, EEB encourages posts to propose projects such as speaker programs, conferences, workshops and seminars to take advantage of these funds to promote the acceptance of ag-biotech.

**¶12. (U)** Funds are targeted towards public outreach to develop support for USG trade and development policy positions on biotechnology. Projects should aim to provide accurate information on the benefits of biotechnology to policymakers and consumers in other countries and to encourage the adoption of science-based regulatory systems. In light of discussions with Congressional staff, funds should be used to create support for USG positions in regions outside the European Union (EU) or to limit the influence of EU negative views on biotechnology. We do, however, consider on a case by case basis, and have provided funding for, proposals from EUR posts that are consistent with our overall strategy.

**¶13. (U)** Acceptance and receipt of funds is contingent on post agreeing to provide within one month of completion of the project a report including the following elements:

- A financial report that itemizes the expenditures of funds.
- A detailed description of the audience reached (number of attendees and nature of audience, e.g. producers, consumers, policymakers), with a particular emphasis on those individuals that may influence national biotech policy.
- Analysis on whether the program influenced public perceptions.
- Level of media coverage (and, if possible, the size of the audience serviced by media).

**¶14. (U)** SUBMISSION OF PROGRAM AND FUNDING REQUESTS: We urge post public diplomacy officers to consult with econ officers, ESTH officers, and Foreign Agricultural Service staff in crafting proposed projects prior to submission of requests. Posts are encouraged to send proposals for FY 09 ag-biotech projects to the Department not later than January 20, 2008. Projects received after that date will be considered based on available resources.

Requests should outline:

- The cost of the proposed program;
- The target audiences;
- The specific ag-biotech issues to be addressed;
- How the project would help meet USG policy objectives (purpose and impact);
- Proposed length of program;
- Whether or not the IIP Speaker Program will be utilized; and
- Name of post responsible officer and contact information.

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Please note: IIP will be sending separate messages to select posts soliciting proposals for speaker projects as funds become available from EEB.

**¶15. (U)** Program proposals will be reviewed by EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT. Please slug cables for EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT/ - Marcella Szymanski

(szymanskimb@state.gov) and Jack Bobo (BoboJA@state.gov).

¶16. (U) EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT will work with posts to further develop promising proposals. Average size of program has been \$10,000-25,000, with some as small as \$2,000 and others as large as \$100,000.

¶17. (U) Funds may be used to pay for travel by participants or speakers to an international meeting or conference hosted by the USG in the United States or for travel by speakers from the United States to another country. EEB's Biotech Outreach funds come with a number of restrictions on how they can be used, so only certain types of projects are appropriate. Applicable restrictions include:

-- EEB funds cannot be used for International Visitor programs or to fund other travel by non-government employees (Invitational travel for non-USG employees is permitted as long as they will serve as a presenter or speaker);

-- Funds cannot be used for representational events or to provide food or beverages for receptions or meals;

-- Funds cannot be provided as grants;

-- Funds cannot be provided as foreign assistance or for training purposes; and

-- Funds expire at the end of the fiscal year, i.e. September 30, 2009.

#### Background on Agricultural Biotechnology

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¶18. (U) In the last ten years more than 475 million hectares/1.1 billion acres of biotechnology crops have been planted around the world. In 2007, nearly two dozen countries grew biotechnology crops on more than 282 million acres/114 million hectares. Ag-biotech growth continues even in Europe: five EU member states now grow biotech crops.

¶19. (U) This is not just a technology for large agribusinesses. More than ninety percent of farmers benefiting from the technology are in the developing world. In 2007, some 12 million small farmers in the developing world benefited from biotechnology crops. Biotech plantings in the developing world increased by 21% in 2007. Biotech offers the potential to help developing countries attack the cycle of poverty, address food security needs, and improve farmers' lives and incomes. Studies indicate remarkable gains by farmers adopting biotech cotton in India, leading to record cotton exports. Scientists are developing new crops that resist drought and disease and provide health benefits to farmers and nutritional benefits to consumers, as well as ensure a reliable supply of staple crops for the developing world (see USTR's Fact Sheet on ag-biotech and development):

[http://www.ustr.gov/Trade\\_Sectors/Agriculture /Biotechnology/Section\\_Index.html](http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Sectors/Agriculture /Biotechnology/Section_Index.html)

¶20. (U) Ag-biotech also provides environmental benefits. Adoption of biotech crops has significantly reduced insecticide use (by an estimated 172,000 metric tons of active ingredients from 1996-2004), and has allowed many farmers to adopt no till farming practices, thereby reducing soil erosion and consumption of energy and water. Reduced use of pesticides in China (an estimated 67 percent reduction in applications among biotech cotton farmers since 2003) has resulted in significant health benefits to Chinese cotton farmers, who previously suffered from exposure to dangerous and sometimes lethal levels of pesticides (see USTR's Fact Sheet on ag-biotech and the environment):

[http://www.ustr.gov/Trade\\_Sectors/Agriculture /Biotechnology](http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Sectors/Agriculture /Biotechnology)

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**¶21. (U) For additional informational materials (including fact sheets, remarks, and related links on ag-biotech)**

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addressees should visit  
[www.state.gov/e/eeb/tpp/c22861.htm](http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/tpp/c22861.htm)

**¶22. (U) Minimize considered.  
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